



URLs on ENVIRONMENT

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Energy Needs, Clean Development and Climate Change. Partnerships in Action.

U.S. Department of State, November 2005

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/57489.pdf>

“The United States are moving forward on a multitude of local, regional and global energy, clean development and climate change initiatives that support the broader goals of promoting economic growth, meeting the need for greater energy resources for poverty eradication, enhancing social conditions and protecting the environment.”

International Climate Efforts Beyond 2012.

Climate Dialogue at Pocantico, November 2005

<http://www.pewclimate.org/docUploads/PEW%5FPocantico%5FReport05%2Epdf>

The report outlines the conclusions of the Climate Dialogue at Pocantico, a group of 25 from government, business, and civil society brought together by the Pew Center for a series of discussions exploring options for advancing the international climate effort post-2012. It describes several “elements” or policy approaches and ways they could be linked to one another under the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change. The elements include:

- Emission targets and trading, with targets varying in form, stringency, and timing;
- Agreements negotiated across the power, automotive, or other key sectors;
- Policy-based approaches committing countries to steps advancing both climate and development objectives without binding them to fixed emission limits;
- Stronger cooperation to develop long-term “breakthrough” technologies and to deploy existing and new technologies in developing countries; and
- New assistance to help highly vulnerable countries cope with urgent adaptation needs and support the development of comprehensive national adaptation strategies.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Public Sentiment About Genetically Modified Food.

Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology, November 2005

<http://pewagbiotech.org/research/2005update/2005summary.pdf>

This memorandum represents an initial analysis of a survey of 1000 American consumers who were interviewed by telephone October 10-16, 2005. The survey on genetically modified (GM) foods revealed that Americans' knowledge of genetically modified foods and animals continues to remain low, and their opinions reflect that they are particularly uncomfortable with animal cloning. The survey also shows that religious and ethical concerns play a significant role in consumer attitudes towards cloning, and that a significant majority of consumers believe that the government should include ethical and moral considerations when making regulatory decisions about cloning and GM animals. Despite continuing concerns about GM foods, consumers do not support banning new uses of the technology, but rather seek an active role from regulators to ensure that new products are safe.

HEALTH

Environmental Factors Affecting the Spread of Bird Flu.

Josh Rothstein, Foundation for Environmental Security & Sustainability, September 2005

http://www.fess-global.org/issuebriefs/environmental_factors_affecting_the_spread_of_bird_flu.pdf

The report notes that the mobility of today's global economy and society makes prevention of avian influenza in every country an international concern. Moreover, addressing environmental links to the spread of avian influenza may provide essential information to delay, minimize, or even prevent a costly pandemic. The author contends that international cooperation in addressing these issues is essential. He concludes that once a pandemic begins, nations likely will devote their resources to the protection of their own population. Therefore, it is necessary to immediately commence international programs to identify environmental links contributing to the spread of avian influenza, and develop effective and appropriate countermeasures.

Pandemic Influenza: Domestic Preparedness Efforts.

U.S. Library of Congress, CRS Report for Congress, November 10, 2005

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/RL33145.pdf>

If a flu pandemic were to occur in the next several years, the U.S. response would be affected by the limited availability of a vaccine (the best preventive measure for flu), as well as by limited availability of certain drugs used to treat severe flu infections, and by the general lack of surge capacity within our healthcare system. The U.S. healthcare system is largely private, while the public health system is largely based in state, rather than federal, authority.

This structure creates numerous challenges in assuring the needed response capacity,

and coordinating the various response elements. Planning is further complicated by the fact that while periodic influenza pandemics have been seen over the years, their timing and severity have been unpredictable. This report will be updated to reflect changing circumstances.

WATER

Liquid Assets: How Demographic Changes and Water Management Policies Affect Freshwater Resources.

Jill Boberg, The RAND Corporation, October 2005

http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG358.pdf

This monograph examines the interaction between demographic factors and water resources, and how they influence the availability of water at the local level. The monograph focuses primarily on conditions in developing countries, and should be of interest to policymakers, academics and others concerned with the interaction between demographic issues and water and other environmental issues.

The author addresses the question of whether there will be a global water crisis. She concludes that localized problems will undoubtedly continue, and more widespread problems may continue in some areas, depending on local physical, social, economic, and cultural conditions. However, she writes, a global water crisis can be averted, in part, by researching demographic variables that are less understood.

FAUNA-FLORA

Bottomfish Fishing in the Northwestern Hawai'ian Islands Is it Ecologically Sustainable?

Dennis Heinemann, Hannah Gillelan, Lance Morgan, October 2005

http://www.mcbl.org/marineprotected/NWHI_Bottomfish.pdf

This joint scientific report released by the Ocean Conservancy and Marine Conservation Biology Institute reveals that the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands was overfished or in the danger zone in 11 out of 16 years—from 1988 to 2003—with only limited fishing pressure, as few boats have fished the distant region. Despite the low fishing presence, commercial fishing has harmed the rich ecosystem, leading to a decline in the important bottomfish populations that exist in the unique archipelago.

“Overfishing is a serious threat to the health of our oceans, and if we are to act as good stewards, we need to make sure that the Northwestern Hawaiian Island bottomfish population remains healthy,” said Dennis Heinemann, Senior Scientist for The Ocean Conservancy and lead author of the report.

RENEWABLE ENERGIES

Renewables 2005: Global Status Report.

Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century, November 06, 2005
http://www.ren21.net/globalstatusreport/RE2005_Global_Status_Report.pdf

Global investment in renewable energy set a new record of \$30 billion in 2004, according to a report produced by Worldwatch Institute for the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21). Technologies such as wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, and small hydro now provide 160 gigawatts of electricity generating capacity, about 4 percent of the world total, the report finds.

The New Harvest: Biofuels and Windpower for Rural Revitalization and National Energy Security.

Patrick Mazza, Eric Heitz, The Energy Foundation, in partnership with The McKnight Foundation, November 2005
<http://www.ef.org/documents/CompFinalNov18.pdf>

Rural America needs new economic development opportunities. At the same time, America faces the challenge of obtaining the affordable, reliable, and clean energy needed for economic growth. America's rural landscape is the place to substantially address both rural economic and national energy challenges. Renewable electrical power generated by wind farms and clean biofuels derived from crops, now just niche players in the U.S. energy picture, can provide a significant share of American energy demands.

WASTES

Electronic Waste: Strengthening the Role of the Federal Government in Encouraging Recycling and Reuse.

U.S. GAO, Report to Congressional Requesters, November 2005
<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0647.pdf>

Available estimates suggest that over 100 million computers, monitors, and televisions become obsolete each year, and this number is growing. If improperly managed, these used electronics can harm the environment and human health. Available data suggest that most used electronics are probably stored in garages, attics, or warehouses, with the potential to be recycled, reused, or disposed of in landfills, either in the United States or overseas. If disposed of in landfills, valuable resources, such as copper, gold, and aluminum, are lost for future use. Additionally, some research shows that toxic substances with known adverse health effects, such as lead, have the potential to leach from discarded electronics in landfills. Although one study suggests that this leaching does not occur in modern U.S. landfills, it appears that many used electronics are exported to countries without modern landfills or with regulations less protective of human health and the environment.

Empty Pockets: Facing Hurricane Katrina's Cleanup with a Bankrupt Superfund

U.S. PIRG Education Fund, December 2005
<http://safefromtoxics.org/pdfs/emptypockets.pdf>

“Hurricane Katrina presents EPA and the Superfund program with its biggest challenge yet – cleaning up after a flood of epic proportions. Hurricane forces and floodwaters that hit the heavily industrialized Gulf Coast in August 2005 created a stew of chemicals, sewage, oil, and pesticides that dispersed and settled widely. In the days and weeks after the hurricane, the Superfund program helped officials sample water for toxic chemicals, contain oil spills, remove barrels containing hazardous substances, and collect and dispose of hazardous waste. The full extent of these toxic releases will take years to understand and even longer to clean, but Superfund will continue to play a pivotal role in making the area safe again for local residents. “

AGRICULTURE

The Economics of Pharmaceutical Crops Potential Benefits and Risks for Farmers and Rural Communities.

Robert Wisner, Department of Economics, Iowa State University, December 2005

http://www.ucsusa.org/food_and_environment/genetic_engineering/economics-of-pharmaceutical-crops.html

The report is the first analysis by a land-grant university economist of potential economic benefits and risks of pharma crops to farmers and rural America. While the pharma crop industry is in its early stages and its course is uncertain, the report leads UCS to the inescapable conclusion that pharma crop proponents’ claims are inflated and, importantly, whatever benefits do materialize, most farmers will not be major beneficiaries.